

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /068 W

----- 041224

R 250845Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4533

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SW, CZ

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER PALME'S CRITICISM OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK
REGIME

REF: STOCKHOLM 1865 (NOTAL), PRAGUE 900

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1. SUMMARY. SWEDISH PRIME MINISTER OLOF PALME HAS
AGAIN CRITICIZED THE CURRENT SITUATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA
IN A SPEECH TO A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY GROUP IN
STOCKHOLM APRIL 19. PALME REFERRED TO THE CZECH AND

SLOVAK PEOPLES AS "VICTIMS OF A DICTATORSHIP WHICH THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THESE PEOPLE HATE AND DESPISE." PALME APPEARS TO BE MOTIVATED BY A DESIRE TO PROJECT HIS OWN AND HIS COUNTRY'S IMAGE AS A NEATLY BALANCED BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. HIS TIMING IS MADE PROPITIOUS BY INDICATIONS THAT REPRESSION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IF NOT UNBRIDLED, IS STILL CONSIDERABLE. AS PALME SEES IT, CZECHOSLOVAK CONDUCT IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH EUROPEAN DETENTE AND A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME FOR THE CSCE. REACTIONS FROM THE OTHER PARTIES, THE PRESS AND POPULAR OPINION HAVE BEEN GENERALLY FAVORABLE TO PALME, ALTHOUGH SOME CONSERVATIVES AND MFA OFFICIALS WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A MORE TEMPERED TONE TOWARD ALL GOVERNMENTS, WESTERN OR EASTERN. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER PALME NOW HAS MADE TWO SPEECHES THAT INCLUDE CRITICAL REFERENCE TO THE SITUATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND, BY BROAD IMPLICATION, ELSEWHERE IN EASTERN EUROPE. AFTER HIS APRIL 13 SPEECH TO A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LABOR GATHERING IN LINKOPING CITING HARASSMENT OF DUBCEK, AND THE HUSAK SPEECH OF APRIL 16, PALME HAS EXPANDED HIS CRITICISM BEFORE ANOTHER SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LABOR GATHERING IN STOCKHOLM ON APRIL 19. IN NEITHER CASE WAS A PREPARED TEXT MADE AVAILABLE BY PALME'S STAFF. PALME'S PRESS SECRETARY HAS STATED, HOWEVER, THAT PALME'S WORDS WERE CAREFULLY MEMORIZED.

3. ACCORDING TO THE MORE EXTENSIVE SUMMARY PUBLISHED AFTER THE APRIL 19 SPEECH, PALME SPOKE AS FOLLOWS:
"SEVEN YEARS AGO THERE WERE EXPECTATIONS OF DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THESE EXPECTATIONS WERE CRUSHED BY FORCE. AS WE SEE IN THE PRESS, ALEXANDER DUBCEK IS STILL HARRASSED BY SECURITY POLICE. I CRITICIZED THIS PERSECUTION RECENTLY. THAT CAUSED PRIME MINISTER HUSAK TO UTTER POLEMICS AGAINST ME. THERE IS NO COMPELLING REASON TO ENTER UPON POLEMICS.
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FOR THAT MATTER, I HAD THE HABIT OF NOT GETTING INVOLVED IN POLEMICS WITH PRESIDENT THIEU OF SOUTH VIETNAM EITHER. THE CZECHOSLOVAK POLICE MINISTER, I.E. THE INTERIOR MINISTER, RECENTLY SAID THAT THE POLICE WILL DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO UNMASK AND WEED OUT REACTIONARY GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS, IN A TIMELY WAY, AND TO TERMINATE THEIR ACTIVITIES WITHOUT COMPROMISE. THIS IS THE WAY THE CREATURES (A PEJORATIVE WORD IN SWEDISH) OF DICTATORSHIPS SPEAK TO EACH OTHER. IT IS A FACT THAT THE CZECH AND SLOVAK PEOPLES ARE VICTIMS OF A DICTATORSHIP WHICH THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THESE PEOPLE HATE AND DESPISE. IN OUR FEELINGS OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE OPPRESSED OF THE WORLD, THERE MUST BE A DREAM,

A HOPE THAT THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THE CZECH PEOPLE
WILL REGAIN THEIR FREEDOM."

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4. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, WHEN SOVIET AMBASSADOR
JAKOVLEW CALLED ON PALME ON APRIL 21 ON ANOTHER
MATTER, THE CONVERSATION TURNED TO PALME'S
REMARKS ABOUT CZECHOSLOVAKIA. NOTHING HAS BEEN PUB-
LISHED ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE EXCHANGE, BUT AN AIDE
TO PALME INFORMS US THAT JAKOVLEW TOLD PALME THAT PRIME
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MINISTER'S REMARKS DID NOT CONFORM WITH THE SPIRIT OF EUROPEAN DETENTE AS EXPRESSED IN THE CSCE. PALME ALLEGEDLY REPLIED THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, SHOULD THE CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENT INCREASE ITS REPRRESSIVE ACTIVITITES AGAINST DUBCEK AND OTHERS, IT WOULD WEAKEN THE SPIRIT NEEDED FOR IMPROVING THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN EUROPE. ACCORDING TO THE SAME AIDE, PALME HOPED TO HEAD OFF PERSECUTION OF DUBCEK BY FOCUSING WORLD ATTENTION ON THE SITUATION. THIS THEME WAS ECHOED IN SWEDISH PRESS SAME DAY. PRESS HAS ALSO LINKED PALME'S REMARKS WITH MARCH 20-22 VISIT OF JIRI PELIKAN, ATTENDING CONFERENCE ON EASTERN EUROPEAN SOCIALISM AT UPPSALA.

5. THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS ARE NOT EXPECTED TO INTERFERE WITH THE PLANNED VISIT OF GIEREK TO SWEDEN IN EARLY JUNE NOR WITH THAT OF SWEDISH MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS BENGT NORLING TO PRAGUE MAY 20-24.

6. COMMENT. PALME APPEARS TO BE MOTIVATED BY A DESIRE TO PROJECT HIS OWN AND HIS COUNTRY'S IMAGE AS BEING NEATLY BALANCED BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. HIS PERSONAL SENSITIVITY TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK SITUATION IS HEIGHTENED BY HIS FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE WITH REPRESSION THERE IN 1948-49, AND HIS LITTLE KNOWN MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE TO FACILITATE THE ESCAPE OF A CZECH GIRL.

7. THE STRONG LANGUAGE USED BY PALME IN HIS CRITICISM OF THE CZECH LEADERSHIP SURPASSES IN INTENSITY ANY PREVIOUS CRITICISM OF A COMMUNIST STATE IN RECENT YEARS.

SUCH LANGUAGE HAS IN THE PAST BEEN RESERVED BY THE PRIME MINISTER FOR RIGHTWING REGIMES, SUCH AS CHILE AND THE FORMER GOVERNMENTS OF GREECE AND PORTUGAL. HIS DENUNCIATION OF THE CZECH LEADERSHIP WILL PRESUMABLY MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR COMMUNIST PARTIES IN EUROPE TO INCREASE COOPERATION WITH EUROPEAN SOCIALIST PARTIES. PALME'S STATEMENT ON DUBCEK ALSO REFLECTS DECREASED CONCERN WITH CATERING TO THE SWEDISH COMMUNIST PARTY, A FACT PARTLY INFLUENCED, WE THINK, BY THE END OF THE VIETNAM WAR. STRAUZ-HUPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HARASSMENT, POLITICAL LEADERS, SPEECHES, POLITICAL SITUATION, PARTY FACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STOCKH02023
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750145-0872
From: STOCKHOLM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197504102/baaaadga.tel
Line Count: 205
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 APR 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <09 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PFOR, SW, CZ, (HUSAK, GUSTAV), (PALME, OLOF), (DUBCEK, ALEXANDER)
To: STATE INFO BELGRADE
BERLIN
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Type: TE

Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006